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Preface

When a sabbatical year became due in 1952–53, I inevitably chose the Balkans, picked Greece, and ended up studying village life. The Balkans had interested me since 1929, when I first went as an instructor to The American College of Sofia, where I spent six years (1929–32, 1934–37). There was also a year's tour as Agricultural Attaché in the American Embassy in Belgrade (1945–46). 114

As for Greece, I had dreamed of getting to know her better ever since the days when I was an undergraduate major in Classical Greek. Two voyages of discovery in 1930 and 1937 made me even more anxious to live there for a spell.

And as for Greek village life, this was a natural subject in view of my training and principal research interest. At first, I expected to study only one or two easily accessible villages, using the same tested techniques in which I had been trained as a sociologist and which I had employed in writing *Balkan Village*, the account of a single community studied in depth. But a thorough survey of the literature in both Greek and other languages, conducted with the help of a competent Greek bibliographer, showed that no general work on Greek village life had been written in over fifty years and that relatively few articles on particular places or regions had appeared. This explains why I was ready to move from the security of precise social-science procedures to the more vulnerable area of personal interpretation, subjecting my conclusions to the scrutiny of at least a score of men and women, each familiar with many aspects of Greek rural life, who agreed to read the rough drafts of this work and test my comments against their experience. A six-week field trip 121 [122] [128] [114]

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121 [114] throughout Northern Greece in 1955 and a briefer visit to Attica in 1959 gave me a chance to note the rapid social changes occurring in the places I had come to know well in 1952–53.

The social scientist, if he is to understand the behavior which he studies, not only must observe what is done but also must try to probe the meanings attached by the actors to what they do. Throughout this work, therefore, I have tried to show how the world looks to the Greek villager. I do not necessarily agree with all of his views, but I think that he has the right to be heard. Wherever possible, I have let him speak for himself.

123 Aside from my research activities of the usual type, I also had approaches to the Greeks through the eyes of my wife Margaret who shopped in the Greek market with her Greek neighbors. Through my twelve-year-old daughter Gerda and my ten-year-old son Robert I shared in the wonders of their daily adventures with Greek friends and playmates. I profited by learning about the vicissitudes and the fortitude of our Greek upper-middle-class landlady, who shared her villa with us. The crises attending the succession of maids and laundresses and their husbands opened up avenues for further exploration.

124 Too much credit cannot be given to Bessie Adossides, my interpreter, who knew the Greek countryside as though it were her own garden and who could translate into idiomatic English the most important nuances of the spoken language. [122] My reading knowledge of modern Greek improved considerably during the year, but time was too brief for me to learn the spoken Greek sufficiently for conducting interviews on my own.

104 In transliterating Greek terms into Latin letters I have approximated the spelling and have not attempted to follow the pronunciation. Those who speak modern Greek will therefore find the transliteration awkward, but those who have studied ancient Greek will find that many words are familiar.

436 [652] Prior to May 1953 the value of the dollar was 15,000 drachmas; after that date the dollar was worth 30,000 drachmas. On May 1, 1954, the drachma was revalued at 1 to 1,000, so that 30 drachmas were equivalent to a dollar. For that reason, in using all figures prior to 1954 I have given the 1954 value, moving the decimal point to the left three places.

122 Thanks should be given to the Social Science Research Council for a grant to help me with my Balkan studies; to the Associates for International Research, Inc., of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for extended research and secretarial assistance; to the University of Kentucky and Harvard University for many courtesies shown; and to the American School for Classical Studies in Athens for giving office space to a nonarchaeologist in their richly endowed Gennadion Library.

000 Many individuals have helped me in countless ways. I can only name some of them here to acknowledge my great indebtedness to all. Those listed, of

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Vasilika

Preface and Acknowledgments

THE FIELD WORK on which this book is based was conducted largely in 1955-1956 under a Fulbright grant, with supplementary funds from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. I am very grateful for this assistance. Return visits were made to the village for several weeks in the summer of 1959, and for two days in July 1961.

Margaret Mead and Hortense Powdermaker were most generous with their time during the initial stages of the project. In Greece, John Caskey, Peter and Eva Topping, Eurydice Demetracopoulou, Korali Krokodilou, and Olympias Kokkevi gave valuable advice, assistance, and encouragement.

John Melios, Nomarch of Boeotia at the time we resided there, helped in selecting the village and introduced my husband and me to the villagers. Our gratitude to him is very great both for this initial help and for his continued interest. Our thanks go also to K. Chlimintzas of the Agricultural Bank of Greece in Levadhia.

The family of Athanasius T. Triantaphyllou, who took us into their home in Vasilika, put us greatly in their debt for many kindly services besides.

Discussions with many scholars have contributed much to this book, though of course I bear sole responsibility for the points of view presented. I should like to mention Henry and Renee Kahane, Sidney Axelrad and Sylvia Brody, and John Andromedas, Fred Gearing, Popie Mohring, Irwin T. Sanders, and Conrad Arensberg.

My participation in the Wenner-Gren Conference on Rural Peoples of the Mediterranean at Burg Wartenstein, Austria, in 1959, and in the similar conference at the Athenian Social Science Center in Athens in 1961, helped me greatly. Special thanks are due to Julian Pitt-Rivers and to John Peristiany, the organizers of the two conferences.

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Vasilika

features include the compact arrangement of its houses, with the fields surrounding them, its accessibility to paved roads, its mixed subsistence and cash crop farming, and the existence within the village of a school, two coffeehouses and stores, several church structures, and a resident priest. In a negative sense, one of Vasilika's features is that there is nothing unusual in its history or present situation which would markedly differentiate it from other farming villages of the region. It has never been the subject of any special agricultural extension campaigns, none of the villagers have wealthy overseas relatives interested in improving the village as a whole, and it is outside the orbit of the tourist. If there is anything unusual about the village, it was the arrival of several shepherd families in 1950 and their subsequent political and social integration into the community.

Vasilika is suitable from the standpoint of field work techniques for several reasons. First, since it has a population of only 216, two field workers could expect to know everyone in the community. Second, the speech of the inhabitants is a form of Greek with only minor dialectic variations from the Athenian demotic form (see glossary) that we had studied in preparation for our work. And third, one of the families in the village was willing to have us live in the upper story of their house, which is located close to the center of the village.

Vasilika's way of life must be understood as completely representative only of itself, but in some of its general features it has most in common with other farming villages on the Boeotian plain. The degree to which the habits, values, and attitudes of the villagers resemble those of other Greeks, at this stage of our knowledge, must remain on the level of impressions. As a rural settlement, however, Vasilika has many features in common with farming villages that are segments of old national cultures in other parts of the world. The culture of the village is assuredly not in all its aspects a uniquely Greek phenomenon. Students of similar villages in other parts of Europe, the Near East, Latin America, and Asia will find many features of the culture and social structure of Vasilika familiar to them. But even these specialists will find a goodly number of features and especially of combinations of features that are entirely unfamiliar, for they are features that are uniquely Hellenic.

Two problems of particular relevance to anthropological studies of the rural populations of modern nations have been considered: the usefulness of choosing a rural settlement as the unit of observation, together with the new lines of investigation such a choice requires; and the selection of a particular settlement for study. These problems present their difficulties, but anthropologists working in old national cultures have some advantages; they can consult the works of other specialists. In Greece, for example, an anthropologist need not act as his own historian, economist, political scientist, psychologist, and sociologist. Folklorists have long been collecting oral literature and folk costumes from all sections of the country. Greeks and non-Greeks alike have produced many varied reports on Greek life and culture, both ancient and modern. Neither does an anthropologist working in Greece have to act as a geographer or agrono-

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TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND

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122 Finally, the officers and staff of the Twentieth Century Fund contributed wisdom and careful scrutiny as well as money to the enterprise, and have caught at least some of my errors and inconsistencies before it was too late. For this, no less than for the grant that made my trip financially possible, I am the Fund's debtor.

000 Yet while all those whom I have named, as well as many personal friends in Greece whom I feel it best to leave anonymous, certainly helped to bring this book to birth, none of them is in the least responsible for the judgments and opinions I have expressed. Nor is the Twentieth Century Fund, in publishing this book, in any way committed to defend the accuracy of my analysis of Greek affairs. The final decision on matters of substance and emphasis was by necessity my own.

WILLIAM H. MC NEILL

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Hospital Care in Provincial Greece

*Ernestine Friedl**

Introduction

The rural population of the province of Boeotia in Greece now makes considerable use of hospital care for childbirth and for serious illness.[1] Both men and women, even those of the older generation, allow themselves to be hospitalized without objection, often, indeed quite willingly. This is a new phenomenon. It is a particularly interesting one because of the many psychological and practical obstacles in the way of the hospitalization of a Greek village patient. Traditionally, there has been a tendency to view hospitalization as a form of desertion of the sick person by the members of his family.[2] Transportation to and from the villages to the provincial town in which the hospitals are located is difficult and expensive. Besides, doctors' bills and hospital costs themselves are quite high by local standards.

Anthropologists have long been interested in the problem of introducing hospital care in rural regions where scientific medicine is not part of the culture. They have also studied attempts to improve the use of scientific medical facilities in cultures where science is known, but is only sporadically utilized by the rural population.[3] In either situation anthropologists regularly record the many difficulties encountered. The analysis of the reasons for the difficulties has resulted in the enunciation of certain principles, which may be summarized as follows: beliefs and practices associated with curing illness in any culture have important latent functions both for the personality of individuals and for the operation of the social structure. In other words, to maintain or to restore physical well-being is the manifest purpose and often

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2. Margaret Mead, ed., *Cultural Patterns and Technological Change*, UNESCO, 1953, p. 250.

3. William Caudill, "Applied Anthropology in Medicine," in *Anthropology Today*, A. L. Kroeber, ed., Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953, pp. 771-806; Alexander H. Leighton and Dorothea C. Leighton, *The Navaho Door*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1944; Margaret Mead, *op. cit., passim;* Benjamin D. Paul, ed., *Health, Culture, and Community*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1955, see especially pp. 31-34, 139, 231, and 241.

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